Okolona Messenger.

FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE SUNNY SOUTH.

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A NEW AND TIMELY SUGGESTION.

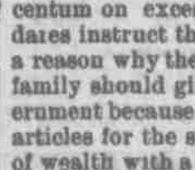
YEAR by year men have come forward with strong appeals for a betterment of conditions in this country, urging the people to demand of their public servants loyalty to the masses, but so many of these appeals have fallen upon deaf ears that it sometimes looks as though there is no hope of changes for the better. Rather it looks as all things must continue to drift as directed by the classes, and the masses be damed. A Kansas friend of olden times, comes forward with a new thought, and to us it looks like a lucid one. Hon. R. H. Nichols, of Howard, Kansas, in a letter to his home paper on national thought, says in part;

I had voted with the republican party several years after I had become convinced that wealth was realizing profit from our protective system to the disadvantage of soil and labor interests; hopeful however, that the evil would be corrected by that party; and now as an ex-republican with democratic symtoms I do not wish to be less consistent. And though not in sympathy with all the "isms" that party keeps in its platforms, and not having been tested and pronounced "Simon pure" by those who boast of democratic ancestry and unbroken fealty to party. I nevertheless have faith that the national democracy, traditionally a free trade party, at no time yielding to the tariff system to an extent beyond government needs, will undertake to regulate the avenues of trade as herein indicated, though I admit my disappointment at the inactivity of democratic senators and representatives in the last congress. I believe that they should have been first to ask for free trade with Cuba; but not having done so should have given prompt and active support to Cuban reciprocity satisfactory to the administration.

"The regulation of the avenues of trade so as to make it possible for the prudent business man with limited means to transact any business he may choose to engage in without the consent of corporations is the necessity; and the needs of the hour a leader who can take the people into his confidence and lead on to victory; a leader who dares demand apparently arbitrary changes in our systems by urging the repeal of the tariff law and the support of the government by direct taxation levied on actual value with the possible addition of a small per centum on excessive annual profits; a leader who dares instruct the masses that there no longer exists a reason why the man of limited means with a large family should give more for the support of the government because forced to buy more of the protected articles for the support of his family, than the man of wealth with a small family and few needs for such protected articles; this is the indispensible and first necessary step toward circumscribing the power of corporations and trusts—this done and the task will be easy, and until some party shall have begun this work in manner and form as will convince the masses that the effort will be uncompromising, the republicans will continue in business at the same old stand.

"I have given it as my belief that the democratic party had opportunities; not to have realized victory in 1900, but opportunities for record making after its defeat in that year and to prepare for just such a victory in 1904 as Lincoln prepared for in 1858. And though somewhat disappointed, I have faith that national democracy will yet improve the opportunity, and that through the agency of that party, stimulated by the growing spirit of independent partisanship, conditions of trade will be so regulated as to prevent a repetition of the inequality of prices disclosed between the dates of the passage of the Dingley tariff law and the republican national convention of 1900. Believing that hosts of your candidates will declare for free trade before the close of the campaign, and hoping that you may be able, at least, to inflict a severe rebuke against candidates whose methods in attending nominating conventions on a special train chartered for the occasion with bands of music and a thousand "rooters" have excluded poor men from political honors."

WEALTH OF FARMS AND PLANTATIONS.



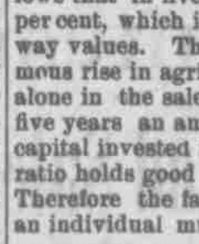
WE find in the Literary Digest some interesting comment on the census bulletin recently issued with respect to farms and farm values. According to this bulletin, the richest class in America is the farming class. They are not the richest individuals, but the richest collection of individuals engaged in any industry. The census bureau finds that the total value of the lands, buildings, implements and live stock of the farmers of the United States is upward of $20,000,000,000. In comparison with this the next largest industry falls far behind. The manufacturing plants of the country, from the giant steel trust down, are valued at about $10,000,000,000. The railroads, counting bonds and capitalization, are valued at $12,000,000,000. So it will be seen that the farmers are worth almost as much as the manufacturers and railroad magnates combined.

Speaking accurately, the total of farm values is $20,514,000,000, divided as follows: Lands, $13,144,000,000; buildings $3,560,000,000; live stock $3,078,000,000; implements, $761,000,000. The railroads, constituting the next greatest industry, have a paper value of $11,800,000,000, with an actual value which is probably much less. It is impossible to compare the income yield of these two industries with a great degree of accuracy, but it can be approximated. In 1900 the railroads of the United States reported gross earnings of $1,501,695,378, or a little more than 11 per cent on the total stock and capitalization. The gross farm income in 1899, the last year for which statistics are available, was $3,764,177,706, and the percentage of gross income upon the investment was 18 per cent. It will be seen that the farming industry made out better than the railroad industry. The actual net earnings of the farmer cannot be calculated, but assuming the railroad averages as applying equally to both, the expense of farm operation ranges somewhere around 70 per cent. Commenting on this showing, the New York Financier notes that it has been claimed in some quarters that the farm industry was on the wane, to which it replies as follows:

"Rapid as has been the development of railroads, the rise in farm wealth has been greater. Thus the total value of farm property in 1900 was more than five times as great as in 1850, and 28 per cent greater than in 1890. The railroad industry in 1850 was in its infancy, so that comparisons extending back fifty years are unfair, but, taking 1890 as a basis, it is found that railway property, as indicated by its total capitalization, rose from $10,029,000,000 in that year to $11,800,000,000 in 1900. This is an increase of 18 per cent, or 10 per cent less than the increase in farm values. In this connection recent investigation of farm and railroad values, growing out of an attempt on the part of the legislature of Iowa to increase railway taxable values, may be cited. The claim was made that inasmuch as the railways had increased their earnings and enhanced share values assessments should rise in proportion. The railways opposed this proposition. Without denying the facts, they contended that the appreciation of railway values had not been as great as the rise in realty values, and to prove this a committee of attorneys representing the principal railways began an investigation of farm values. Records of actual sales publicly filed showed that in the last half decade the average appreciation of land in Iowa had been in excess of $20 an acre. The present value of farm lands in Iowa is estimated by a conservative authority to be $50 an acre. If this is true, it follows that in five years the appreciation has been 66 per cent, which is much in excess of the rise in railway values. These figures give an idea of the enormous rise in agricultural wealth. Iowa has gained alone in the saleable value of her farming lands in five years an amount much in excess of the total capital invested in banking in the state and the same ratio holds good in most of the agricultural sections. Therefore the farmer, considered in every light, is an individual much to be envied. As a class he is prosperous as never before; his capital account, as represented in the value of his plant, is appreciating, and his income yield, based upon present prices for his product, is above that of other industries, or avenues of commercial investment. It is idle to repeat that he forms the rear backbone of the county, and none will begrudge him the easy path into which he seems to have entered. As long as he is prosperous the country has nothing to fear in the way of industrial depression."

Another New York journal notes that it is fortunate that prices of farm products went up with the price of land, "or the farmer would find himself, like certain of our industrial enterprises, too largely capitalized to make any profit." This strikes us as being in the nature of putting the cart before the horse. Lands rose in value because the products of agriculture first rose in price, and the two are connected and inseparable. In the period from 1892 to 1897 the prices of all products of the farm were extremely low and the price of land went down in proportion. So we may say that, as a rule, the price of farm products is the measure of the value of lands. And we may note, too, that the capitalization of agriculture is never inflated or watered. It is the one great industry in which the "promoter" or trust-former has never been able to operate.

THE SOUTH VINDICATED.



IT is remarkable how opinions on the subject of negro suffrage have changed in the light of the actual experiment. Many of those who were most enthusiastic advocates of the enfranchisement of the negro immediately after his emancipation have lived to see and admit their mistake. Some have gone to the extent of declaring that the south was right in opposing this policy and protesting against it.

From the most unexpected quarters frequently comes the confession that negro enfranchisement in the United States was a great blunder from which not only the south, but the country at large, and even the negro himself has suffered severely.

A notable instance of better second thought on this subject is given by Harper's weekly.

No periodical did more than this one to create and intensify sectionalism in the United States. It was among the most powerful of influences that arrayed the north and the south against each other in a state of mind that made the civil war inevitable. When the war was over Harper's Weekly took its place among the apostles and advocates of the most drastic measures of reconstruction. Nothing was proposed in the way of humiliating the south that was too severe for this organ of sectional hate and revenge. It urged the adoption and enforcement of the most radical policies that were ever proposed, or even discussed, by the Republican party.

Neither Thad Stephens, Ben Wade nor Oliver P. Morton ever advocated any measure of insult or oppression for the the south that did not receive the cordial commendation of this "journal of civilization."

It was in hearty accord with the Thad Stevens plan of "putting the under rail on top" in the south.

In the course of time Harper's Weekly changed its views very decidedly on some of the main questions that were involved in the reconstruction scheme. The Weekly went far under its former ownership, which was the one that established it and made it famous, toward taking a position in regard to the wisdom and justice of negro suffrage directly in conflict with that which it held during the reconstruction era.

Under its present management Harper's Weekly has become even more pronounced in its recantation of a theory for which it once contended furiously.

In a recent editoral it makes the following frank admission that the south was right in opposing negro enfranchisment:

"To an American citizen, having the negro in mind, it is inevitable that such an opinion should at once be read in the light of our post bellum legislation incorporated in and based on the war amendments, and so does Mr. Bryce. What is his verdict? That the negroes were not fit for suffrage when it was given them, and that dispassionate Americans studying the facts now admit that the granting of suffrage to them was a mistake. Of course this is what the southern white man has always said, and what the northern press and politicians are reluctantly admitting. And yet with the sad record of unwise haste in conferring manhood suffrage upon the negro in the south and upon the Hawaiians in Hawaii, which our country already has in its dealing with this ticklish problem of controlling unlike races by democratic forms of government, there have been men of repute as scholars and statesmen in this country during the past four years who would have had us repeat the method and score another blunder. Some day it will be seen by the dispassionate historian of the future, as he comes to write of the beginnings of a new epoch of American history, that one of the greatests qualities displayed by the American people and their responsible officials during the period of legislation following the Spanish-American war was the lesson derived from experience in the south with the negro. In Porto Rico an executive and a council deriving their place not from the voters, but from without, stand between the represenative body and the possible excesses of the latter. Had the southern states had a simular bulwark during the reconstruction period how different the history of those commonwealths would have been. In the Philippines, by the advice of the civil commission, democratic government is to be a growth, not a deposit; trianing in suffrage is to begin in the lower forms of political structure."

Opinions like these are coming with increasing frequency and force and the vindication of the attitude of the south on the subject of negro suffrage becomes every day surer of full and final vindication.

An interesting story is being told of "Jim" Younger, says the Lansos City Journal. It is said that when the bandit was sick in the Minnesota penitentiary a daughter of one of the deputy wardens prepared delicacies for him. "Jim" fell in love with her, and when he was paroled secured her consent to marry him. Her parents at first objected, but finally yielded. When "Jim" went to get a license however, the official to whom he applied told him that in the eyes of the law he was a dead man, and that he couldn't issue license to a corpse. "Jim" investigated and found, it is said, that the official's construction of the laws of Minnesota is correct. He can legally be restored to life by a pardon, and past experience teaches him that that this is a very difficult thing to get. It looks, therefore, as though he and his sweetheart will have to forego the felicities of matrimony. A Southern Missouri paper inquires what would be done with a man who should kill Younger. "In the eyes of the law he is dead," it reasons. "It would be absurd to try a man for killing another man who is already dead." Perhaps the murderer would be technically a ghoul and would be prosecuted for grave robbery. The fine logic of the law leads to strange conclusions some times.

The report comes from Paris that the Academy of Medicine has examined the discovery claimed to have been made by Dr. Baudoin, who has succeeded in condensing a barrel of wine into the compass of four gallons. When the water is added in proper proportions, it is said, the most precious of wines recover all of their subtle aroma. So the time may come when a fishing party will be able to carry its liquid supplys in a less obstructive manner than it is now obliged to carry it in, and, what may appeal to some, in larger quantities. The calm, quiet, innocent recreation of angling is not unlikely to become more popular than ever.

The oldest musical organization in the country is what the Old Stoughton Musical Society calls itself. It held its seventh annual reunion at Highland park, Avon, Tuesday, and 15,000 people were present, according to estimate. Its centennial was celebrated in Stoughton June 6, 1886. On this last occasion there was a "sing," and other performances.

HAS LEARNING A DUTY?

THE recent death of Lord Acton naturally raises the question whether learning owes any duty to society. Lord Acton was one of the most distinguished of English Scholars. His knowledge of philosophy, political economy, history and kindred subjects was prodigious. He possessed one of the largest and best selected private libraries in the world. He wrote readily and well when induced to write at all. And yet his learning died with him. His only literary productions were a few ephemeral magazine articles which serve to show that he commanded an excellent and attractive style, but are of no permanent value.

Society does not venerate the miser; on the contrary, it despises him. Wealth is properly regarded, not as in itself an end, but as a means to an end—the promotion directly of the happiness of its possessor, and those dependent on him, and indirectly the rest of the world. Andrew Carnegie's famous dictum that it is disgraceful to die rich, while somewhat extreme, has been pretty generally assented to. But is not the miser of learning almost, if not quite in a class with the miser of money? How much worse it is to spend a life in getting a fortune merely for the pleasure of counting it over, than to spend it getting knowledge merely for the pleasure of possessing it? It will be conceded of course that the miser of knowledge is likely, other things equal, to be a much more agreeable person than the miser of money. His study can hardly fail to broaden his view and mellow his heart. But the miser of money has the advantage of him in one respect. However hard he may try to avoid it he must leave his wealth behind him, where it may be put to good use by those who receive it. The miser of learning, on the contrary, when he dies, can neither take his wealth with him—at least so far as reason or revelation instructs us—or leave it behind him. He may, like Lord Acton, build up an immense and valuable library; but even his library is certain not to prove as serviceable to another as it would be to him if he had the disposition to use it for the benefit of mankind. It is reported that Andrew Carnegie has bought Lord Acton's library and presented it to John Morley. Its transfer is suggestive. Mr. Morley, with not a moiety of Lord Acton's learning and with vastly less than a moiety of his books, has done valuable literary work and, at the same time, has made a place for himself in the front rank of modern English statesmen.

It has been said in Lord Acton's defense that he had a sincere love of truth; that his immense knowledge, especially of history—which, as everybody who has read Carlyle knows, is a mere tissue of lies—taught him the danger every writer incurs of commiting himself to error; and that rather than risk violating truth he chose to write nothing at all. This plea strongly recalls the case of that Iowa miser who recently decided to devote his fortune to philanthropic purposes, but who, when he got ready to begin, could find nobody and nothing that was worthy to receive it, and who, at last reports, was still living in a tent and clinging to his treasure. There is doubt that the man who thinks and writes incurs the risk of using faulty logic and making untrue statements. But if this had always been a bar to thinking and writing, very few would have written or thought, and man would, we imagine, have evolved very slowly from the condition of his simian ancestor.

The truth seems to be that Lord Acton was simply a bookworm constructed on a large plan. He read eight hours a day, not so much because he is particularly industrious as because he had that peculiar selfishness which is sometimes characteristic of learned men, and because, like too many bookworms, he was habitually indolent. The indolence of the bookworm is generally regarded as one of the least harmful of characteristics. But it lacks a great deal of being entirely harmless. Men who have not knowledge and talent will write whether those who have them do or not, just as men without conscience or ability will take part in politics whether those who have them do or not. And in the former case, as in the latter, the indolency or supercilliousness of the inactive enables the others to inflict injury upon society.

Learning and intellect have such important places to fill and are so constantly demanded to check narrowness and error that the inactivity of a single man who posesses them is a positive wrong to society. The bookworm who knows books, and knows nothing besides, may well be left to his library.

He is one of the most useless, if also one of the most inoffensive, of mankind. But it is painful to see one who has both knowledge and the ability to use it refusing to come forth from his study and try, either by his writings or his personal exertions, to help elevate mankind and better the world he lives in.

So far Admiral Higginson has not been called before a naval court of inquiry on account of his victory in the maneuvers off the New England coast. Has it come to this, that naval officers are to be permitted to win victories without being punished for it?

Europeans seem to think that if the president insists on the Monroe doctrine he should make the South American republics behave better.